

The 10th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, August 2, 2026
“Marks of the Early Church ~ Servant-Hearted Leadership”
Psalms 123 Acts 6:1-7 Mark 10: 35-45

The apostles are preaching_____, the gospel is spreading throughout Jerusalem, and thousands have come to faith, From the outside, everything appears to be _____. Yet Luke, the careful historian, reminds us that even healthy churches face_____.

They don't panic, they don't ignore the problem, or become defensive. Instead, they lead with_____, humility, prayer, and a servant's_____.

Our culture celebrates those who rise to the top, accumulate influence, command attention, and exercise_____. And success is often measured by how many people work for us, how much recognition we receive, or how much_____we possess.

Servanthood, by contrast, is often viewed as_____, and something to avoid because it sounds ordinary, unnoticed, and_____.

Jesus turns this way of thinking_____.

“Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.” (Mark 10:43-44)

According to Jesus, true greatness isn't measured by how many people serve us, but by how faithfully we_____others. And biblical servanthood isn't thinking less of ourselves, nor is it allowing ourselves to be treated as though we have no_____.

Rather, it's choosing to place God's_____before our own ambitions and the needs of others before our own comfort. It's using whatever gifts, abilities, or influence, God has entrusted to us for His glory and for the good of His people. It's leadership shaped not by pride, but by_____; not by privilege, but by sacrifice; not by seeking recognition, but by_____Christ.

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVANT-HEARTED LEADERSHIP

Characteristic #1: Servant-hearted leaders _____.
Every healthy church, no matter how vibrant or faithful, will eventually encounter_____. In fact, sometimes the very blessings God pours out create new_____.

“Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number...” (Acts 6:1)

This is an important detail, and the complaint that follows isn't the result of a dying church, but of a _____one.

The apostles could've reacted in several unhealthy ways. They could've become _____and insisted that no problem existed, blamed the people for complaining, or allowed the disagreement to deepen until the church was divided along cultural lines. Instead, they_____.

Servant-hearted leaders aren't_____by problems—they recognize that listening carefully is often one of the most loving forms of leadership.

“It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.” (Acts 6:2)

The issue wasn't whether serving tables was important—the issue was_____.

This wasn't an excuse to_____serving; it was a recognition that every servant has a _____assignment.

“But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body...Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:18-20, 27)

Healthy leaders understand that ministry belongs to the_____Church, and every believer has a place of service and a contribution to make.

They refused to allow personal pride or unrealistic expectations to_____them from Christ's mission; and they recognized that preaching, prayer, pastoral care, administration, hospitality, and practical service all matter deeply.

Am I faithfully serving where Christ has called me?

Characteristic #2: Servant-hearted leaders _____.
“Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.” (Acts 6:3)

Notice the order—_____comes before_____; and before asking what these men could do, the apostles wanted to know who they were.

They were to have a good_____. Their lives were to be marked by integrity and faithfulness. They were to be full of the Holy Spirit. And they were to be wise and possess the spiritual_____to apply God's truth with discernment and grace. In other words, these weren't simply capable men, they were_____men.

“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature...For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

God has always been more concerned with the condition of a person’s _____ than the strength of their _____. That’s because Christian leadership is never just about accomplishing tasks, it’s about _____ Christ.

“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones. It shall not be so among you.” (Mark 10:42-43)

In Christ’s kingdom, greatness is measured not by power, but by _____; not by prominence, but by _____; not by titles, but by _____.

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

Leadership in the Church isn’t about power; it’s about _____ love.

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...who, though He was in the form of God...emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant...He *humbled Himself* by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

Notice that Paul doesn’t just tell us to _____ Christ’s humility; he tells us to _____ His mind set. Every Christian leader—and indeed, every Christian—is called to cultivate the same _____ heart that was seen perfectly in Jesus.

The kingdom of God is built less by spectacular acts than by countless quiet acts of faithful _____.

Every time we choose humility over pride, every time we place someone else’s needs before our own, every time we serve without expecting recognition, we’re _____ the character of Christ.

“Does the way I serve help people see Jesus?”

Characteristic #3: Servant-hearted leaders _____.

“And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen...and Philip...and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus...These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.” (Acts 6:5-6)

The apostles didn’t _____ to every responsibility themselves, neither did they

simply recruit volunteers to fill empty positions. Instead, they recognized, affirmed, commissioned, and prayed for others whom God had _____ for ministry.

Leadership in Christ’s Church isn’t about creating spectators; it’s about _____ servants.

“...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12)

Every member _____. Every member has a _____. And every member has been entrusted with _____ to be used for the good of others.

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Neither Stephen nor Philip remained _____ to the task for which they were initially appointed. Their faithfulness in humble service became the _____ to even greater opportunities for ministry. In fact, God often entrusts greater responsibilities to those who prove _____ in smaller ones.

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much.” (Luke 16:10)

Our world tells us to chase _____, God calls us to pursue _____. The size of the assignment has never mattered nearly as much as the faithfulness with which we carry it out.

The Christian life was never meant to be lived from the _____. We’re not just consumers of ministry, we’re _____ in God’s mission.

How is God inviting us to use those gifts for His glory and the good of His Church?



“And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7)

When leaders lead with _____, when every believer serves _____, when gifts are used for the good of others, when unity is _____, the gospel moves forward, the Church grows, and Christ is glorified.

This is still God’s _____ for the Church today. When every believer embraces the privilege of serving Christ according to the gifts they’ve been given, the Church becomes _____, the love of Christ becomes more _____, and the good news of Jesus continues to _____.